

MI Child Support Formula - proposed child support changes

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To: <MCSF@courts.mi.gov>
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Subject: proposed child support changes

Hello,

I've been divorced since 1996 and have a 13 year old daughter and have joint custody. I get her everyother weekend, and for 1 or 2 weeks for vacation in the summer. I'm lucky in the fact I can get her whenever I want, all I have to do is call and ask. My ex and I are on friendly terms which we both feel is in the best interests of our daughter. Unfortunately I feel most case's are not like this from the divorced people I have talked to. I will list the proposed changes I have read and give you my opinion.

1. that child support payments be set before alimony is agreed upon. Because I don't pay alimony this is a hard, no experience, but I feel it is a good move. Especially taking into account the non-custodial parents earnings. I realize the child's welfare is the primary concern, but it seems that the noncustodial parent, which is usually the male, life is made alot harder because of the financial burden and having to pay alimony too, should change the rate of child support payment, i.e. lower it. We still have a house payment, car payment, health ins. payment, ect.

2. that \$280 in miscellaneous medical expenses be handled in payments to the custodial parent thru the year. This one is harder. In my case, my daughter has continued to be carried on my health coverage thru work. Although my employer covers most of the cost for this, there is an increase in my premiums for carrying her. To me this seems like double dipping. If the health care is already provided by the noncustodial parent, why is it felt that an additional payment be required?

3. that only 1 parent need carry health insurance for a child. I feel this is a good idea, with the 1 exception. If the custodial parents medical coverage is better, would this not be better for the child? Maybe some type of reimburement plan could be set up from the noncustodial parent, in this case I would agree with #2, i.e. if the custodial parent payed for health care.

4. a formula that would tie payments to time a parent spends with a child. This 1 is a pandora's box. In my case this would work because the ex and I are civil and friends. This is not the case for many, or even most divorce case's. How would this be determined? In case's where there are still bitter feelings and the parents do not get along, this could be used in limiting the noncustodial parents time to not only keep the custodial parents payment the same, but also as a form of revenge. It seems like lawyers came up with this 1. If pure logic were the only principle in divorces, this would make perfect sense. Unfortunately, its the emotional part of divorce which is the most damaging, and hardest to overcome.

One final opinion, it seems to me the child support formula was set up when males were the primary provider, and women usually stayed home with the children. This is no longer the case, many if not most mothers work, if not just part time. Yet when child support payments are figured out, they rely mainly on the noncustodial parents income. Don't get me wrong, I love my daughter and want to provide for her, but I feel this responsibility is overburdering the noncustodial parent, and should be determined by what both parents earn. Also, the money I pay in support is counted as part of my gross income, even though I see none of it, and taxed accordingly. I'm not saying tax the payments and reduce them, but feel some kind of relief,

taxwise or other, should be granted the parent paying support. Thank you,
James B. McGregor